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THE INFORMANT

An interdisciplinary newsletter distributed by the Department of Linguistics at Western Michigan University to provide information about developments in linguistics to students, staff, and friends in the field.

Mystery Problem

The first person to solve the following mystery problem will receive congratulations from the Chairman of the Linguistics Department, who wasted an hour of his valuable time on it. (He got the right answer, though.) The origin of the problem is uncertain, but it is the sort of thing that should appeal to linguistic types, most of whom get symbol-minded after awhile anyway. The interesting thing to watch for is the way in which you attack the problem--your theories on how to play the game.

Given: There are five houses, each of a different color and inhabited by men of different nationalities, with different pets, drinks, and cigarettes.

Problem: On the basis of the 'givens' and the following 'clues,' determine who owns the zebra and who drinks water.

Clues:

1. The man who smokes Chesterfields lives in the house next to the man with the fox.
2. Coffee is drunk in the green house.
3. The Norwegian lives in the first house on the left.
4. The green house is immediately to the right (your right) of the ivory house.
5. The Japanese smokes Parliaments.
6. Kools are smoked in the yellow house.
7. The Spaniard owns the dog.
8. The Englishman lives in the red house.
9. The Norwegian lives next to the blue house.
10. The Lucky Strike smoker drinks orange juice.
11. Milk is drunk in the middle house.
12. The Old Gold smoker owns snails.
13. The Ukrainian drinks tea.
14. Kools are smoked in the house next to the house where the horse is kept.

Mystery Language

Remember this problem from last June's INFORMANT? You were supposed to identify the language of an unknown text--and translate it into standard written English. The text appears at the left below, with the standard English translation at the right.

Bătrânețe haine grele

The Heavy Cloak

Bătrânețe haine grele,
Ce n'aș da să scap de ele.
Trec zilele trec și eu,
Îmbătrânesc și-mi pare rău.

Old age is a heavy cloak,
What I'd give to shed its yoke.
Days are passing, so am I.
Every year brings one more sigh.

Așa trec zilele mele,
Una bună, zece rele.
Trec zilele, trec și eu,
După viață-mi pare rău.

This is my life day by day:
Ten are sad and one is gay.
Days are passing, so am I.
Aging makes me want to cry.

The response to our problem was not exactly overwhelming: only two people got the right answer, and only one of them could do the translation. The correct identification of the language is Romanian (or Rumanian, if you prefer--the Romanians don't). The text is of an old folk poem furnished us by the mother (Mrs. Anna Bruda) of our secretary, Mrs. Elaine Moyer. Mrs. Bruda, who resides with her husband in Youngstown, Ohio, was born in Romania. She also furnished us with the standard English version.

The only person to correctly identify the language of the poem and translate it into English was Dr. Johannes Kissel, Assistant Professor of German in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Below is his version, which, although different from the model (as would be expected), has a certain charm of its own.

Old Grey Clothes

The old grey clothes
What wouldn't I give to get rid of them
The days pass and so do I
To grow old for me is sorrow.

So pass my days
One good one, ten bad ones
The days pass, and so do I
After living, I feel sorry.

Dr. Johannes Kissel
(from an interview by Elaine Moyer)

This is an appropriate time and place for us to introduce you to Dr. Kissel, who has a rather remarkable linguistic background. He is a speaker of English, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Swedish. (That makes him an octolingual!) In addition, he has a reading knowledge of Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Greek,

Romanian (obviously), Portuguese, Sanskrit, Old Icelandic, Latin, and several others. (That makes him . . . well, polyglottal, to say the least.) On top of that, he has studied the structure of many other languages, including Latvian, Hungarian, Swahili, Arabic, Armenian, and Turkish. (That makes him a linguist, let's face it.)

How, you may ask, did Dr. Kissel become acquainted with all of these languages? Some of the exposure comes from the fact that he travelled all over Europe between the ages of 17 and 26 as a nationally-ranked (in Germany) intercollegiate tennis player. (Our good authorities say that he is formidable on the tennis court.) This experience gave him the opportunity to learn new languages from the players that he met from various countries and to practice using the languages that he had studied in school or picked up on his own. He also lived for awhile in Paris and London, where his friends included one who was born in Russia and had lived in Persia and Israel (i.e., trilingual).

Dr. Kissel's family background and education laid the foundation for his multilingual abilities. He grew up in Northern Germany, with two German dialects spoken in the home and a different one in the community. Therefore, he became sensitive to language differences at an early age and developed a feeling for language. At the Gymnasium he studied Latin for 9 years, English for 6 years, and French for 5 years. During his five years at the University of Muenster, in Westphalia, he specialized in Romance and Germanic Linguistics, with majors in English and French and a minor in Slavic Languages (Russian). He also renewed there a study of Spanish which he had begun at the age of 16 or 17.

Dr. Kissel received a scholarship to Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, where he got a B.A. in English and German. (It is interesting to note that he was not permitted to major in French there because he was already too advanced after 12 years of study.) He then received an Assistantship at Michigan State University, where he took his Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures, with a Linguistics minor. Before coming to Western Michigan University, where he teaches Modern and Middle High German, Dr. Kissel taught for three years at Albion College (German and linguistics).

Tennis, anybody?

Critical Language Minor

A Critical Language Minor for the Department of Linguistics was unanimously approved by the Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee at their meeting of October 7, 1969. If the proposal passes through the other curriculum committees without damage, it will become effective in the fall semester of 1970. This new minor, which is a non-teaching program for undergraduates who wish to specialize in a critical language, must be distinguished from the Linguistics Major and Minor, which are the regular undergraduate programs in general linguistics.

Interested students must consult with the Critical Languages Supervisor in the Linguistics Department to determine which languages are eligible for this minor and to receive a signed recommendation for their program. The man to see is D.P.S. Dwariakesh, 411 Sprau Tower, phone 3-0958, who will be in charge of overseeing this

program in his capacity as Critical Languages Supervisor. The languages that will be eligible for this minor will be determined in the winter semester, but it looks as if Hindi-Urdu and Swahili will definitely be included.

Requirements for the Critical Language Minor

20 semester hours, as described below
(all 4 hr. courses unless otherwise noted)

16 hrs. in the language of interest

12 hrs. in

Ling. 505 Basic Critical Languages: Basic X
and Ling. 506 Intermed. Critical Languages: Intermed. X
(prereq. 505)
and Ling. 507 Advanced Critical Languages: Advanced X
(prereq. 506)

4 hrs. in either

Ling. 508 Reading Critical Languages: Reading X
(prereq. 505)
or Ling. 509 Writing Critical Languages: Writing X
(prereq. 505)

4 additional hours in one of the following sections

The language of interest

Ling. 508 or Ling. 509 (the one not taken under
the 16 hr. requirement above)

Another relevant critical language

Ling. 505 Basic Critical Languages: Basic Y

Survey courses

Ling. or Anthro. 575 Studies in Languages of the
World: Languages of X, 3 hrs.

and Ling. 598 Independent Studies in Linguistics, 1 hr.

An introductory course in linguistics

Ling. 200 Linguistic Analysis

or Ling. 500 Introduction to Linguistics

Total 20 hrs.

Critical Language Offerings

Four different critical languages are now being offered in the fall semester, and all of them will continue into the winter semester. Hindi-Urdu is at the Intermediate level (506), and Sanskrit, Korean, and Swahili are at the Basic level (505). Next semester, Mr. Dwarikesh will teach Advanced Hindi-Urdu (507--the first critical language to reach that level) and Intermediate Swahili (506). Miss Kim will offer Intermediate Korean (506), and Mr. Muthiani will teach Intermediate Swahili (506). The schedule for winter is as follows:

506	AA	Intermediate Korean	Kim	MWF	8:30 - 9:40	3315 Brown
506	CA	Intermediate Swahili	Muthiani	TTh	10:00 - 11:50	2230 Brown
506	LA	Intermediate Sanskrit	Dwarikesh	TTh	7:00 - 8:50	3318 Brown
507	HA	Advanced Hindi	Dwarikesh	MW	3:00 - 4:50	3318 Brown

Plans for the summer of 1970 call for the offerings of Intermediate Latvian (506), Reading Latvian (508), and Writing Latvian (509)--all through the Division of Continuing Education. Plans for the fall semester of 1970 include Basic Hindi-Urdu, Basic Swahili, Basic Japanese, and Basic Arabic. We have had numerous requests from students for other offerings--Finnish, Portuguese, Swedish, Tagalog, Serbo-Croatian--but the lack of adequate materials, staff, and time prevent our going off in too many directions at once.

Furthermore, the Area Studies Committees of the Institute of International and Area Studies are becoming more and more active and making more and more demands on our services. All of the new Area Studies curricula (for Africa, Asia, South Asia, and East Asia) include critical language study in their programs--some more strongly than others. For example, the South Asia curriculum requires a competency in one of the languages of the Indian area, of which the Department of Linguistics is equipped to handle Hindi-Urdu and Sanskrit. The African Studies program requires either a European language (especially French) or Arabic or an African language. The East Asian curriculum allows for the study of Japanese, Korean, or Chinese, and the Asian curriculum permits the study of a foreign language of Europe or the Asian sub-areas.

Below is a summary of our understanding of the critical language needs of the area committees for the foreseeable future--restricted to two languages for each area, and with a priority of the first mentioned over the second mentioned:

Africa

1. Arabic
2. Swahili

East Europe

1. Serbo-Croatian
2. Latvian

South Asia

1. Hindi-Urdu
2. Sanskrit

East Asia

1. Japanese
2. Korean

Latin America

1. Portuguese
2. (?)

South East Asia

1. Tagalog
2. Indonesian (?)

At the rate of one part-time instructor for each language, that comes to between ten and twelve instructors within the next few years. If we should be blessed with full-time faculty who can handle both of the languages of their areas of specialization, that still comes to six members. And if we combine full-time supervisors--teaching advanced courses--with part-time instructors--teaching basic courses at the same time--that adds up to between sixteen and eighteen bodies. (Miller-Davis, take note: our department currently has only two offices of our own!)

Critical Language Instructors

Introducing our part-time instructors for Korean and Swahili.

Miss Kun-ok Kim is currently teaching Basic Korean (505) and will offer Intermediate Korean (506) in the winter semester. She is a graduate student at Western in the M.A. program in Teaching in the Community College, with Linguistics as her major field. Miss Kim is a native of Seoul, Korea, where she was born just after the end of World War II. She attended Kyung-Kee Girls' High School in Seoul and was President of the Religion Club, Chairman of the Public Relations Club, and a member of the Flower-Seed Club, the Red Cross Club, the School Choir, and the Boy Scout

Choir (!). In 1965 she was a representative of Korea at the second conference on Asian Moral Rearmament in Seoul.

Miss Kim entered Kyung-Hee (not Kee) University in March 1965 as a major in English Literature. Besides English and the usual liberal arts courses she studied German and Chinese and was a member of the Tennis Club. Just before graduating from college with honors, Miss Kim audited several University of Maryland courses at Yongsan Education Center in Seoul. After graduation in February 1969, Miss Kim took two more University of Maryland courses and then flew to Kalamazoo in August. She is staying at the home of Dr. Andrew Nahm, Chairman of the Asian Studies Committee, who recommended Miss Kim to us about a year ago.

Miss Kim's family is very talented. Her father is an artist; her mother is a student at the Korea Theological College; her older brother is an engineer, her older sister is a secretary in a pharmaceutical college; and her three younger brothers are students in school. The entire family is musical, and Miss Kim herself sings and plays the piano, the violin, the ukelele, and kayakeum (a Korean stringed instrument). Her trilingual ability--in Korean, Japanese, and English--will come in handy next year when we start the Japanese course. Welcome, Suna (her nickname)!

Mr. Joseph Muthiani is currently teaching Basic Swahili (505) and will offer Intermediate Swahili (506) in the winter semester. He is a graduate student at Western working on an M.A. degree in Sociology, which he will complete in April 1970. His thesis topic is "Theories of Social Change--With Reference to Africa." After completion of the M.A. he expects to begin a Ph.D. in Education at Western next fall. (Our staff is also tempting him with some linguistics courses, since he obviously has the aptitude for this kind of work.) He is currently the organization representative from the Kalamazoo African Student Union to the African Studies Faculty Committee at Western.

Mr. Muthiani was born on a farm in Machakos (more correctly, 'Masaku'), Kenya, East Africa--the sixth of twelve children. His father still has a farm there, but his mother died in 1962. The twelve children included eight boys (one now deceased) and four girls. All of the sisters and all but two of the brothers are married, so Mr. Muthiani is now an uncle to over 25 nieces and nephews. The oldest brother served as a Signal Corps 'bomber' in the King's African Rifles of the British East Africa Army in the Burma campaign of World War II. (He now works at the International Airport in Nairobi.) Another brother is Secretary of the Kongundo Coffee Grower Association in Machakos; another is a teacher; and the youngest is just finishing high school. The entire family is trilingual in English, Swahili, and Kikamba (the native language).

Mr. Muthiani attended high school in Machakos, studied for two years at Kongundo Teachers Training College, and taught in the Kongundo area for several years. He taught Swahili and English to first graders, and these and other subjects to students in an intermediate school (junior high). He first came to America in September 1960 to study for his B.A. at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas; but after one semester he transferred to Wisconsin State University at Oshkosh (1961). In 1965 he graduated from Oshkosh with a B.A. in Political Science, including the study of two more languages: Spanish and French. Later that year he took some graduate courses in Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee but then switched to Western and Sociology.

Mr. Muthiani met his wife Betty at Milwaukee, where she had come for a conference on African Studies from Wisconsin State University at Au Clair. Mrs. Muthiani took her B.S. in Biology from Au Clair and is currently doing graduate work in Science Education for a Specialist Degree and is a graduate assistant in the Biology Department at Western. She studied Swahili for four weeks in North Dakota where Mr. Muthiani was teaching in the Peace Corps Program.

Mr. Muthiani joined the Peace Corps Program as a teacher of Swahili in 1965, and he has been associated with that organization ever since. The Peace Corps teaching has taken him to Milwaukee (University of Wisconsin); Tuskegee, Alabama (Tuskegee Institute), North Carolina, and North Dakota. In North Carolina last summer he was the assistant Language Coordinator of Cross-Cultural Training, and this academic year he is a consultant to the program. Next summer he will be off again--perhaps to East Africa to review the volunteers. The Peace Corps teaching method--called the 'direct' method--was not new to Mr. Muthiani, since he had employed that same method in teaching Swahili and English to first graders in Kenya in the 1950's. It is also the method that he uses in the Swahili class at Western.

The 'direct' method was developed during World War II for the purpose of giving servicemen intensive training in speaking a foreign language in the shortest time possible. The method forces students to immerse themselves in the oral language itself, rather than focusing their attention on grammar or writing or literature. The instructor and students use only the 'target' language in class, and the students are expected to practice it outside of class as much as possible, particularly in the Language Laboratory. The students are not allowed to consult books or dictionaries in class, and they must not take notes, chew gum, eat candy, or smoke. Although Western's course is not intensive (only four hours of class time per week, plus two hours in the lab), the class is progressing very rapidly. If you want to see a master of the direct method at work, visit the Swahili class; and if you do, you'll learn some Swahili in spite of yourself.

Welcome, Joe!

Pluses and Minuses

1. Did you know that in Chicago, Illinois, you can hire a Rug-Reader? No, Rug isn't some exotic language of the Middle East--it's just 'rug,' like 'carpet.' Imported Persian rugs sometimes have a border of Arabic design, which sometimes includes language material. If your friendly rugman isn't a woof with a warped sense of humor, he can give you an accurate translation. Who knows--maybe you're the possessor of that infamous 1927 model which said, "Help! I'm chained to the loom!"
2. Mrs. Lalita Muižnieks, our first graduate student in the Teaching in the Community College M.A. program in Linguistics, assisted Dr. Joseph Lelis last summer in the teaching of Latvian through the Division of Continuing Education. Next summer, after she finishes her degree work in June, she will become a full-fledged instructor in that program. Mrs. Muižnieks will teach Intermediate Latvian (506), while Dr. Lelis (from Howard University) will teach Reading Latvian (508) and Writing Latvian (509). The courses are being offered for credit (4 hrs. each) for the first time.
3. Some course changes will go into effect next fall which will interest Linguistics students. All prerequisites have been dropped from all general linguistics courses--that is, all but Critical Language courses--except for Ling. 580, Linguistic Field Techniques, which requires consent of the instructor. The number of credit hours for 580 and 575 (Studies in Languages of the World) has been dropped from four to three so that the Anthropology Department, which double-lists the courses, can enroll their students in them. A new course, Ling. 598, Independent Studies in Linguistics, 1-4 hrs., will be available in the fall. And the full descriptions of the Critical Language courses will appear in the Linguistics section of the undergraduate catalog--as well as a description of the Critical Language Minor, of course.
4. We understand that some of our readers have doubted the veracity of an item in one of last year's issues of the INFORMANT: that Dalmatian was the only language to die in the air. Well, that reference not only was accurate, but we can expand on it. Dalmatian was a Romance language formerly spoken on the east coast of the Adriatic--an area that is now Slavic, though still called Dalmatia. There were two dialects (naturally): that of the island of Veglia ('Veglian' or 'Vegliote') and that of a few medieval manuscripts, 'Ragusan.' A linguist named Bartoli went to Veglia in the 1890's and recorded the speech of the surviving speakers, the last of whom was Antonio Udina. Now Antonio Udina was blown out of a mine in 1898 and died in the air. So there! (Bartoli doesn't say what his last word was, but a good bet would be "Geronimo!")
5. The Linguistics Department graduated its first major last August, and, appropriately enough, she was summa cum laude. We're speaking of Ursula Dissmann, who was also the first major to enter the program--and the first captain of the bowling team. Ursula's academic grade-point average was over 3.9; her bowling (pin-point) average was 146. Needless to say, she made the Dean's List every semester that she spent here. Ursula is now a graduate student in the M.A. program in Medieval Studies, but she is still able to take some linguistics courses. Congratulations, Urs!
6. Honors also came to other linguistics majors and minors at the new University Convocation on September 2, 1969. Highest honors went to Ursula Dissmann, of course,

who was one of six summa cum laude graduates. Milan (Mickey) Tesanovich, a Linguistics major from Gary, Indiana, received a Superior Cadet Award from the Department of Military Science. Mary Gernant, a French major and Linguistics minor, was honored for receiving, in 1968-69, an Honors College Undergraduate Assistantship, a Dwight B. Waldo-Paul V. Sangren Scholarship, and General Education Honors. One of Mr. Dwarikesh's Hindi-Urdu students, Thomas Culver, was given the Asian Essay Award by the Institute of International and Area Studies. Two students from the winter 1969 Linguistic Analysis class received honors: Henry Cohn was cum laude, and Terri Magnus got a Cooperative Secretarial Award for Business Education.

7. The winter Serbo-Croatian class was showered with honors at the University Convocation in September 1969: Pat Nichols received Departmental Honors from Political Science, graduated cum laude, took the Harold Smith Patton Senior Award in Economics, received a University Graduate Fellowship for 1969-70, and entered Omicron Delta Kappa. From the same class, Mary Ann Poggenburg took Departmental Honors in Psychology and was recognized for having an Honors College Undergraduate Assistantship in 1968-69. Also honored from that class were Scott Marovich (First Course Physics Award, Honors College Undergraduate Assistantship for 1968-69 and 1969-70, and Dwight B. Waldo-Paul V. Sangren Scholarship for 1969-70); Susan Holaday (Honors College Undergraduate Assistantship for 1969-70 and a Dwight B. Waldo-Paul V. Sangren Scholarship for 1969-70); and Bernard Kuiper (Paul V. Sangren Alumni Scholarship). Five students from that Basic Serbo-Croatian class are now studying in Yugoslavia: Liga Abolins, Mary Ann Poggenburg, Eileen Ryan, Pete Hooker, and Pat Nichols.

8. The 'publish or perish' policy in the Linguistics Department is so strong (just kidding, of course) that even the secretary, Mrs. Elaine Moyer, is rushing into print. Her latest publication appears in the Fall issue of College and University Business Magazine, put out by Harper and Row. It consists of a letter to the Editor in response to the 'Building of the Month' award which was given to Sprau Tower last spring by CUBM. Mrs. Moyer took issue with the recognition of a building which is far from perfect from a secretary's point of view, and she pointed out the imperfections with great style and clarity. So far she has had several responses to the letter, including one from the Administration. (Oh oh!)

9. We would like to welcome the new majors and minors in Linguistics who have signed up since the end of the winter semester last April. The new majors are Janet Lowry and Linda Clark (formerly a minor). The new minors are Janet Baraszu (English major), David Blackstone (English major), Kathryn Dye (English major), Jackie Kaplan (Speech Pathology major), Ursula Latzko (German major), Catherine Licavoli (English major), Barbara Malczewska (Russian major), Monica Nahm (French major), Suzanne Robertson (English major), Diane Shepard (English major), and Elizabeth Trenter (Speech and Theater major). The majors in German, Russian, Speech, and Speech Pathology are the first from those areas to take Linguistics minors. Welcome to the program!

10. In the next issue of the INFORMANT we will try to get Caroline Houston to report on her Community Ambassadorship last summer in Argentina. We will also report on the Fall Bowling Tournament--if the 'Establishment' can get up enough courage to face the undergraduates again. In the meantime, note the following announcement:

Mr. John Willis of the Anthropology Department will offer Language in Culture, Anthro. 370 (332), 3 hrs., in the Winter Semester of 1970. The prerequisite is Ling. 200 (Linguistic Analysis) or Anthro. 220 (Cultural Anthropology).